

Predevelopment Study Former Draper Complex Hopedale, Massachusetts

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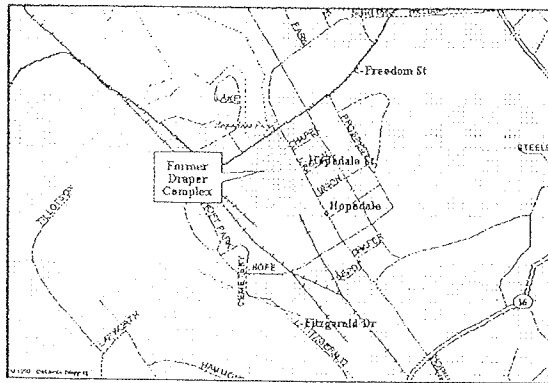
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Purpose

This report has received the generous financial support of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, the Massachusetts Electric Company and Hopedale Industrial Center, Inc.

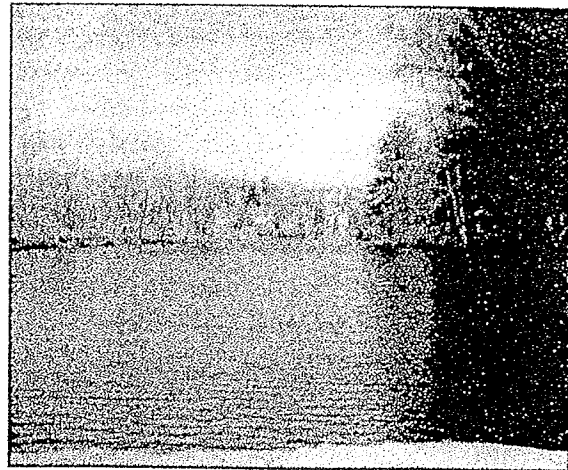
The purpose of the predevelopment study for the former Draper complex in Hopedale, Massachusetts is to assess the prospective reuse opportunities for the facility and to formulate plans for the redevelopment of the property. This very large facility has been vacant for many years and has experienced substantial deterioration. Community, regional and state leaders have identified the redevelopment and reuse of the Draper complex as a priority.



Project Description

The Town of Hopedale has a population of less than 6000 people. Except for the former Draper complex and a small industrial park at the Hopedale airport, Hopedale is predominantly residential. Commercial and industrial activities which support the activities of Town residents are found in neighboring Milford and the growing I-495 belt of new commercial and industrial complexes.

The former Draper Complex is located in the center of Hopedale, Massachusetts and abuts major portions of Hopedale and Freedom Streets. The property owned by Hopedale Industrial Center, Inc. (HIC) and includes approximately 50 acres of land, a portion of which is located in close proximity to, but not contiguous with, the land on which the factory buildings are located. The now vacant buildings on the property contain approximately 1.7 million sq.ft. of floor area. In addition, HIC controls, though its ownership of the first mortgage deed, the adjacent "ball fields" and former land fill site, comprised of approximately 55 acres, which was abandoned by its owner, a bankrupt successor to Rockwell International.



Hopedale Pond

The 1.7 million sq.ft. of floor area are anchored by substantial brick buildings fronting on Hopedale and Freedom Streets, with other factory buildings on the interior of the property. Except for the massive brick structures fronting on Hopedale Street and Freedom Street, most buildings on site are severely deteriorated and functionally obsolete for virtually all uses. Hopedale Pond is created by a dam on Freedom Street at the factory site, with outflow of the

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Pond passing through the factory property and reappearing as the Mill River at the south end of the property. Entering and abutting the site is the main line of the Grafton & Upton Railroad (G&U), a modest, short line railroad used by the factory in its heyday, which has not operated since the closing of the factory by Rockwell and is a significant blighting influence on its surroundings. The G&U has only negligible operations at its northerly end in South Grafton. The condition of the rail line in Hopedale is very poor and would not provide for connections to the active portion of the railroad. The Town of Hopedale has been identified as an Economic Target Area by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As such, development activities in Hopedale may be eligible for a number of Commonwealth-sponsored financial incentive programs, including financing guarantees, tax credits and other governmental development programs.



Mill River at Draper Complex

Summary of Conclusions

1. Certain portions of the property have historical importance to the Town and the region.
2. Many of the buildings are severely deteriorated and functionally obsolete for virtually all uses.
3. Virtually all the buildings are

functionally obsolete for current Town zoning of the property, which is industrial use.

4. Potential modest environmental problems at the property need to be assessed.

5. Access to the property is inefficient and not convenient.

6. The presence of abandoned railroad buildings, vehicles and tracks is an open blight and inhibits development of the site and use of adjacent land areas by the Town.

7. Additional parking will be necessary for redevelopment efforts.

8. The commercial and industrial market is improving, but still weak in relation to attracting uses to Hopedale.

9. Except for rental family housing, only approximately 500,000 sq.ft. of uses in multiple categories can be identified for development at the site from the existing market dynamics of the region.

10. Community and state leaders support redevelopment of the complex for uses which contribute to the municipal budget, but do not support uses, such as family housing, which would place financial stress on the municipal school budget.

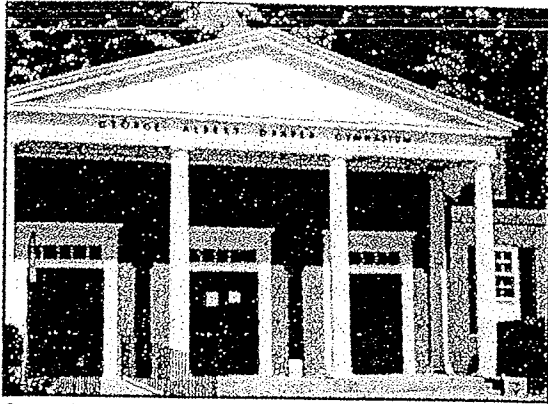
11. Economic feasibility is negative without special financial resources and concentrated assistance from public and private sector sources.

History

The Town of Hopedale was founded in the 1840s as a socialist utopian experiment. The leading force in this was Rev. Adin Ballou who was a philosopher and who initiated the Industrious and Peaceful Christian Brotherhood in Hopedale. Shortly after Hopedale was started, the Draper family set up a small factory in the Town and became part of Rev. Adin Ballou's movement. However, the movement faltered after 15 years and the Drapers were left to pay off the debts.

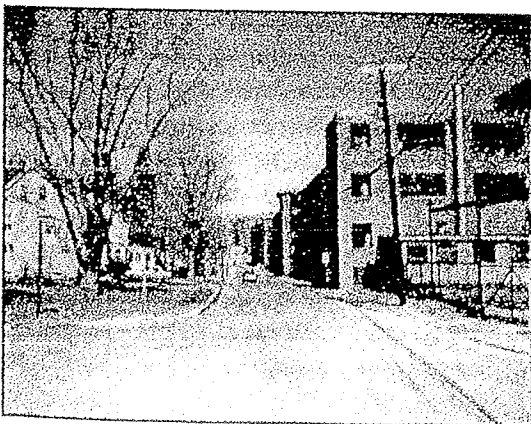
Over time, the Draper factory expanded and changed. At its height, it was the largest

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One of many Draper contributions to Hopedale

manufacturer of textile machinery in the world. Hopedale Pond was created by a dam at the plant to generate power. The Drapers involvement in the government, lifestyle, economy and culture of Hopedale was all-encompassing. The Drapers not only built most of the governmental and community buildings, but also served them with heat, maintenance, electricity and services. The Drapers owned virtually all of the land in the Town. All buildings were owned by the Drapers, including the residential buildings. The residents of Hopedale were essentially selected by the Drapers. Generally, Hopedale children were hired for the factory, but would have to live outside the Town limits until they had proven themselves. Only the Drapers could decide when employees might be ready to move back into Hopedale.



Freedom Street, at northwesterly corner of site

A major change in Hopedale occurred when the Drapers sold the business to North American Rockwell Corporation around 1970. What had been a paternalistic company town now became part of a multi-national corporate culture. This did not last long, however, with the plant closing in the late 1970s. Small businesses were housed in a portion of the plant until the mid-late 1980s. However, for the past ten years, the complex has been vacant and has continued to deteriorate.

During the mid-1980s, a plan was proposed which would have converted the complex to a residential facility involving the reuse of some of the buildings, combined with new construction. Many in Hopedale opposed the plan, preferring to see non-residential, higher tax-paying uses on the site. The plan was revised a number of times, but was dropped when the housing market weakened in the late 1980s.

In 1990, Hopedale Industrial Center, Inc. (HIC) purchased the property. HIC has made improvements to slow the deterioration of the buildings, clear out the considerable site and building debris which was left by prior owners, and remove oil tanks and other environmental problematic materials. Efforts to redevelop the property have been inhibited by a very poor real estate market which has predominated until recently.

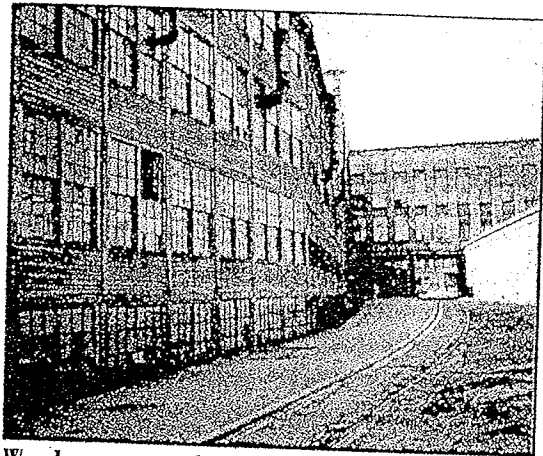
The Challenges

With an improving economy, the potential for the redevelopment of the complex has increased. Given the immense size of the facility in relationship to the size of the population and economic activity in the surrounding area, however, redevelopment of the property presents some extraordinary challenges.

Community leaders in Hopedale vocally prefer the redevelopment to be of a non-residential nature. The dilemma is that, even in a large

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market, 1.7 million sq.ft. of commercial floor area is a very large development to plan for financial success over a reasonable period of time. Hopedale is not a large market. Even if the facility could be predicted to absorb 100,000 sq.ft. a year through a leasing program (and the current Hopedale market would not support such an absorption rate), it would take a financially infeasible period of 17 years to reach full occupancy.



Wood structures showing severe deterioration

Severe deterioration and functional obsolescence exist in many of the buildings on site. Visually, conditions do not appear as severe because most observers see only the rather sound buildings fronting on Hopedale Street and Freedom Street which are suitable for redevelopment. Many of the buildings on the interior portion of the property are beyond rehabilitation, both in terms of their condition and their proximity to buildings intended to be rehabilitated.

Physically, almost all of the buildings on site are not marketable for modern manufacturing. The loss of the textile industry to the south is almost always blamed on differential labor and energy rates. Attributing the loss to these factors is accurate. However, another resulting factor of the move was that manufacturers were also

attracted by more modern manufacturing facilities, since the buildings of the north were quickly reaching operational obsolescence. New England is full of vacant and under-used multi-story mill and factory buildings. Although we point to a few success stories of reuse and adaptation to other uses, most 19th century and early 20th century mill buildings are underused because they no longer meet the needs of modern technology. The Draper buildings are characterized by rather long and narrow floorplates with relatively low ceilings held up by closely clustered columns. Today's manufacturers want wide floorplates with few columns supporting an ever-increasing desire for higher and higher ceilings. Essentially, if the lower wages and energy costs had not drawn away much of our manufacturing, our manufacturers would have soon rejected these old, multi-story buildings anyhow. In fact, the most recent building on the Draper site is a wide, clear-span building with high ceilings.

Surprisingly, environmental issues at the main complex do not appear to be severe. There is material containing asbestos used in pipe insulation. Although in moderately fair to good condition, this material must be removed at a great expense in areas of the property slated for demolition and rehabilitation. There are diluted PCBs in some electrical transformers. A use other than manufacturing requires the removal of all PCB fluids and transformers at the complex, which is a costly undertaking. There appears to be lead paint present on existing ceilings and walls. Although all known oil tanks, both above and below ground, have been removed from the property without locating contaminated soil or groundwater, there may still be a few oil tanks located at the site. However, there are no known significant environmental problems on the main portion of the site, as detailed in records kept by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection or as discovered by the present owner of the property. This does not mean additional

environmental issues will not be identified as any project on the property proceeds.

In any case, redevelopment of the Draper site will have to compete with projects built or to be built on undeveloped land in the vicinity of I-495 which have little or no environmental problems. Accordingly, any environmental clean-up necessary at the complex will involve costs not shouldered by the competition. Although current information suggests manageable environmental issues at the principal Draper complex property, other nearby property, formerly owned by Draper, was used for many years as an industrial landfill. Community leaders identify that the operators at the Draper complex were rather responsible in dealing with industrial waste; however, the landfill was likely used by other area industrial manufacturers which were not as responsible. Therefore, it is probable that the landfill contains environmental problems of concern, which may involve considerable liability and expense if abatement is necessary to redevelop the site.

Access to the property presents many challenges. In a regional context, Hopedale is not a convenient location with regard to commercial and industrial activity. The characteristics that make Hopedale a wonderful place in which to live work against it as a commercial and industrial center. Major commercial and industrial uses are looking for sites close to interstate highways. Although not remote from I-495, access from this route involves traversing the downtown area of Milford and passing through the residential areas of Milford and Hopedale and then through the center of Hopedale. The route is not only congested and circuitous, but also passes by residential areas and school complexes and may be considered incompatible with heavy commercial traffic. The difficulty in this regard as it applies to the Draper complex is that there are numerous other alternative sites closer to the interstate and with

clear commercial paths to major interchanges.

With regard to the site itself, neither Freedom Street or Hopedale Street are appropriate for heavy commercial or industrial traffic. Freedom Street passes through pleasant residential areas of the Town and is not designed for non-residential traffic. Hopedale Street connects the property to the center of Hopedale, which is an elegant, picturesque New England village center. The presence of heavy commercial traffic would not be welcome and may be objected to by the community.

Fitzgerald Drive enters the site directly from Route 16. Although Fitzgerald Drive does extend to Freedom Street, it seems to end at the property's southern boundary and the driver is presented with an uncontrolled and haphazard choice of alternatives, some leading nowhere. Also, Fitzgerald Drive, as an entrance to the site, is complicated by a number of the essentially abandoned tracks of the Grafton & Upton Railroad. These tracks, once important to the operation of the complex, are now unusable and in a poor and un-maintained condition. They not only hinder usable access to the site, but also present a hindrance to the proper redevelopment of the property because they bisect otherwise developable areas of the site.

At the site itself, access must be addressed. In earlier days, much of the raw materials for production came in by rail and finished product left on similar rail cars. People walked to work from the many Draper-owned residences surrounding the property. People from outside Hopedale came in by trolley cars and other modes of public transport. Truck and car access eventually supplanted rail and public transportation, but since it was a single, continuously-run industrial operation, adaptations on the property evolved and inconveniences were tolerated.

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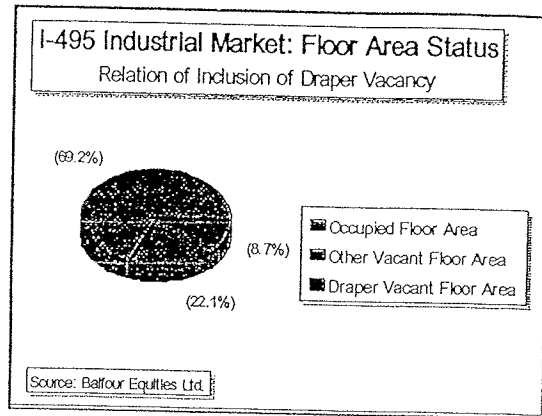
Nowadays, to be competitive in a market for companies to be located at the site, access and parking must be addressed with a plan which is not only efficient but also attractive and at least as desirable as presented at competing properties in the region. If all buildings were to remain on site, there would be insufficient land to offer even minimal parking. Remote parking locations in the Hopedale market would not be considered competitive; therefore, the notion that the landfill site could be used for remote parking is not a workable solution. What is needed is a proper balance of convenient accessways to attractive parking areas located in close proximity to the buildings which will remain or are built at the complex. Depending on the extent of redevelopment, this could mean the construction of structured parking or the inclusion of indoor parking within some of the redeveloped buildings.

In summary, the redevelopment of the Draper complex presents a complex matrix of challenges, any one of which will require a concentrated effort by a dedicated group of private and public sector entities. Without the support of community and state leaders to place this redevelopment at a high priority, it may be difficult to meet the challenges and the success of redevelopment may not be achieved.

The Market

A relatively weak, but improving market, exists for the redevelopment of the Draper complex. Balfour Equities, Ltd., an affiliate of the well-known Boston-area real estate brokerage firm of Peter-Elliott, LLC, undertook an in-depth analysis of the real estate market and its dynamics as it relates to the Draper complex. The analysis has concluded that, without a strong, focused marketing program, less than 500,000 sq.ft. could be redeveloped at the complex and such redevelopment would involve multiple uses.

The principal commercial and industrial markets in the area are found along I-495. Strong concentrations of commercial and industrial activity are found in the areas where I-495



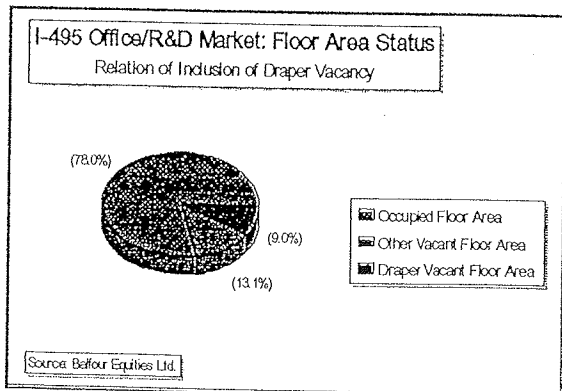
intersects with the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) in Westboro and I-95 in Mansfield. These two intersections define the boundaries of the market impacting the Draper complex. This area is defined by Balfour as the I-495 market. Absorption of space along I-495 has improved during the first half of the decade and has been accompanied by increasing rental rates. Unfortunately, considerable space continues to exist along this band of I-495 and vacancies tend to be higher in proportion to the distance along I-495 from the two principal intersections with I-90 and I-95.

Hopedale and Milford are generally located midway along this band of I-495, although somewhat closer to I-90 than I-95. It is this midway area along I-495 which Balfour defines as the Principal Market Area (PMA). Within the PMA, there are nearly 4.5 million sq.ft. of office/R&D space. Of this, over 1.7 million sq.ft. were identified as vacant and available for lease, for a vacancy rate of 21.5%. In the overall I-495 market, there are nearly 18.5 million sq.ft. of industrial space with a vacancy rate of 23.6%, or 4.4 million sq.ft. of floor area.

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For the municipalities nearer the Hopedale area, however, industrial vacancy rates average around 35%. These statistics support the trends which identify more vigorous commercial real estate markets the closer the section of I-495 is to the intersections of either I-90 or I-95.

Rental rates for commercial property in the PMA for office/R&D space range between \$2.50 and \$14.00, with an average gross rent of \$11.20. Triple net rents (meaning tenants pay all operating expenses and real estate taxes) averaged \$8.15 per sq.ft. for office space and \$6.28 per sq.ft. for R&D space. Rates for industrial space range between \$2.25 and \$6.00, with an average triple-net rent of \$4.78. Generally, the office/R&D space has been absorbed by the market better than the industrial space. While the office/R&D market shows improvement, the industrial market continues a trend of increasing vacancies.



As a separate category, the analysis addressed older, mill-type properties in the market. the analysis identified over 3 million sq.ft. of other mill properties in the PMA, with vacancies of over 1.3 million sq.ft., or over 40%. The analysis notes that the statistics point to the general competitive disadvantages these types of properties face in the marketplace. Even with rents ranging between \$1.00 and \$2.50, these

properties are not as attractive as more expensive, but more suitable, commercial and industrial space.

In the analysis summary regarding the Draper complex's place in the commercial and industrial markets, it notes that the 1.7 million sq.ft. at Draper represents about 10% of the total industrial market and, if included in the market statistics, would increase vacancy rates by about 5%. Draper would represent about 20% of all vacant space in the total market. Given mixed absorption in the commercial and industrial markets, the market dynamics would be negatively impacted by the inclusion of Draper. On a more practical plane, the analysis suggests that the relatively ample availability of space with greater suitability and more convenient locations work against significant commercial and industrial space being absorbed at the Draper complex during any reasonable length of time unless market dynamics change dramatically. The analysis suggests it is conceivable that small, incubator companies seeking inexpensive space could represent 50,000 to 100,000 sq.ft. at Draper.

Regarding other types of uses for Draper, the analysis identified modest potentials in the areas of nursing homes, elderly housing, assisted living housing and condominium housing.

The analysis identified the property as currently being ideal for residential development. Citing the beautiful Town of Hopedale, the presence of the extremely attractive Hopedale Pond and the many living amenities in and around the project site, the analysis identified the complex's remoteness from major highways as an advantage for residential use. The strongest potential for reuse at the complex involves rental housing. Due to the limited rental housing in the area and demographic dynamics, there is sufficient demand to support 225 to 265 units of rental housing. The two major issues with rental

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housing are the economic viability, which is negative at this time due to the substantial upfront predevelopment costs, and that there will be resistance to this type of use in the community. Even if permitted by the Town's various regulatory bodies, a major involvement of public political and financial support will be necessary to prepare the site for development. The potential for receiving public financing and backing for a politically unpopular reuse is low or non-existent.

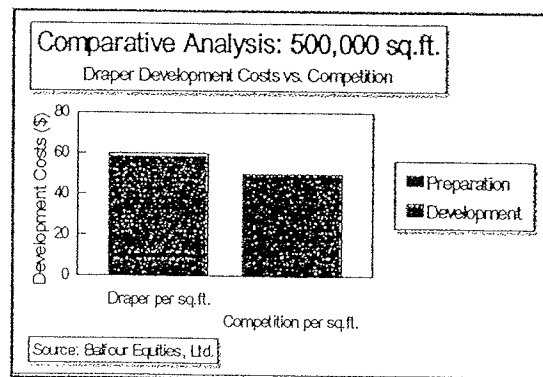
Combining residential uses, other than politically unpopular rental apartments, with prospective commercial and industrial development which might also be located at the site, the analysis projects no more than 500,000 sq.ft. of floor area to be absorbed at the Draper complex for all types of uses in a multi-use configuration.

Economic Feasibility

If the "bottom line" is the only consideration, the redevelopment of the Draper complex does not make financial sense. The market environment can support less than one-third of the floor area of the entire complex within any reasonable time period for floor area absorption. In order to prepare the site for marketing efforts, a substantial expense must be incurred for demolition, clean-up, site improvements, access improvements and cosmetic building improvements. Some architectural and engineering for these activities will be required.

Balfour Equities conservatively estimates that at least \$5 Million will be necessary for demolition, access improvements, cosmetic betterments for the remaining buildings, site landscaping and parking. In addition, a small portion of the remaining buildings must be improved both externally and internally for a marketing and project administration center. It will be necessary to show prospective users that the internal environment of the complex can be

attractive and useful. If an estimated 500,000 sq.ft. of existing buildings remaining on the site can be redeveloped as the first phase of the overall project, the conservative \$5 Million will represent approximately \$10.00 per sq.ft. of development costs which do not have to be absorbed by many of the projects with which the complex will compete. In a continued weak commercial and industrial market, this additional expense to a project can represent \$1.00 to \$2.00 of net rent which would have to be added in order for the project to be feasible. If a first phase of development were to involve only 100,000 to 200,000 sq.ft., with no identifiable prospect for succeeding phases, an even greater cost per sq.ft. would have to be absorbed by the project for these predevelopment costs.



The Draper complex, as competitively disadvantaged as it is in the categories of location and access cannot support these additional predevelopment expenses. To be feasible, the project will need substantial public political and financial support in order to overcome financial, geographic and other competitive disadvantages existing at the Draper complex.

The Strategic Development Plan

A strategic plan has been developed for the purposes of bringing the redevelopment of the

Draper complex to a starting point in order that a concentrated marketing effort can commence. The physical strategic plan is depicted on conceptual plans developed by Pressley Associates, Inc. and included in this document. These plans are the result of numerous working sessions of the study team, whereby market considerations were integrated with physical information and critical planning issues.

The strategic plan starts from the premise that many of the interior buildings need to be removed not only because of dilapidation, but also because they are functionally obsolete and that any market assessment cannot support the redevelopment of the entire 1.7 million sq.ft. of floor area.

Accordingly, the strategic plan recommends that the buildings fronting on Freedom Street and Hopedale Street (identified as "E-2" through "E-8" on the enclosed conceptual plans) remain but that most of the structures on the interior portion of the site be removed to provide for open space amenities, improvement of waterway channels, better highway access, parking and new construction development sites. Essentially, the plan would retain the important building frontage on the two major streets, eliminate the worst buildings that are not very visible from the street and divert access and parking away from the residential areas of Hopedale.

The principal commercial entrance to the property is recommended to be Fitzgerald Drive. Commercial traffic would use Route 16 to access Fitzgerald Drive enroute to the property. This plan not only improves site access, but also protects the town center and residential neighborhoods from truck traffic and congestion by people gaining access to the property. Entrances will be provided at Hopedale Street and Freedom Street; however, these will be secondary and will be treated with landscaping and rotary channelization to distinguish them

from the principal commercial access.

The presence of trackage on site and through the site by the Grafton and Upton Railroad is recommended to be eliminated. This rail line does not effectively exist since the physical connection to the active portion of the railroad has been impassable for many years. Without the presence of major industrial activity at Draper, the reason for the rail line no longer exists. By eliminating rail lines, it not only provides for a better development design at Draper, but also opens up community use of the land adjacent to Town Hall and other municipal buildings.

It is therefore suggested, as an attractive opportunity for the Town, that athletic fields currently north of Freedom Street be relocated, improved and expanded to land areas directly behind Town Hall and considerably more convenient to Town elementary and secondary schools. In addition to greater convenience for the Town and its residents, the relocation of the athletic fields will provide for more cost efficient maintenance, supervision and security by including them as part of a municipal complex with DPW and the Police Department in directly adjacent buildings. The new Massachusetts Open Space Bond Bill should be a principal financing tool for this relocation. Besides creating the athletic fields to serve the community exceedingly better than current conditions, the relocation sets the stage for important economic development initiatives important to the Town and the State. Access to the new athletic fields is proposed via Fitzgerald Drive, Depot Street and a new access road parallel to and between Hopedale Street and Fitzgerald Drive, which essentially follows the current alignment of the railroad tracks.

Eight blocks of space in the existing buildings to remain are proposed as development areas, for phasing purposes. (See conceptual plans for the

site) These total 989,131 sq.ft. and divide into blocks of space ranging between 50,000 and 200,000 sq.ft. These buildings, originally used for manufacturing, are functionally obsolete for most industrial purposes. Therefore, the uses proposed for the redeveloped buildings will tend to be commercial, service, institutional and residential. Site "E-1" may be augmented with new construction. The nearly 1 million sq.ft. shown in the plans to remain on site are approximately double that of the proposed first phase of 500,000 sq.ft. It will be necessary, therefore, to improve the exterior condition of all of the buildings in first phase activities in order that these succeeding phase buildings will not detract from the project's marketing potential.

Six development sites are also proposed for new development. One is shown as including tennis courts as an amenity for the uses on site; however, these courts could be relocated should site "N-1" be more compatible with commercial or industrial use. Sites "N-4" and "N-5" would appear to

be more commercial in nature due to their size and placement on site. Site "N-5" would appear to be an excellent location for retail banking or a small restaurant. Development sites "N-3", "N-2", "E-1" and "N-6" would be most suitable for heavy commercial or industrial use. These sites and the Town's character suggest light industrial or R&D activities and the most appropriate industrial use for the property.

Amenities include the opening and restoration of the Mill River, with a large green-space island accessible by foot traffic for passive recreational use. Ample landscaping will accent new accessways, foot-paths and parking areas as well as beautifying the existing and proposed buildings.

Relocation and expansion of athletic fields as part of a municipal center behind Town Hall will open up the land off Freedom Street northerly of the main site for new development. Recommended is a small scale industrial and

office park with a new access road connecting to Fitzgerald Drive at Freedom Street. The access road will traverse the site and reconnect with Freedom Street to the north. Small commercial and industrial buildings ranging between 5000 sq.ft. and 40,000 sq.ft., each, are proposed with accessory parking in a park-like environment. Access to the park is proposed via Route 16 and Fitzgerald Drive in order to keep commercial and truck traffic off Town residential streets.

Summary of Floor Area in Buildings Proposed for Redevelopment

<u>Plan Blocks</u>	<u>Floor Area (sq.ft.)</u>
A	74,068
B	46,814
C	205,795
D	113,430
E	212,048
F	200,000
G	136,976
	989,131

A Concentrated Market Campaign

It soon became evident during the market analysis portion of this project that there would be no short-term future for the Draper complex's redevelopment if existing market dynamics were to be controlling factors. The property is merely too large, its buildings too antiquated, its access too remote and the competition for similar space

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too great to guarantee even modest success.

In the face of this nevertheless, there is a strong interest by community and government leaders at all levels to have the property back into productive use. The community's desires, however, would not include uses which would become a tax burden to the Town, namely residential development which would generate large increases in the school budget. As a result, the rather meager potential for multiple uses at the property is further reduced if the community will not support family rental or condominium housing at the complex.

Recommended, therefore, is a concentrated effort, drawing from all levels of government and community leadership, to attract a relatively large user or group of users to the complex. Whether business, industrial, institutional or governmental, the project needs a relatively large critical mass of use to build upon. If one large entity could be attracted, through a concentrated effort by government and private sector leaders, to take 300,000 to 500,000 sq.ft. of the complex, the project will gain its own special market dynamic. Additional uses can be sought which would benefit from being in close proximity to the activities of the initial entity(s). The general momentum established by the initial entity(s) can tend to attract other users.

Essentially, the first major tenant of any significant project is the most difficult to secure. It is no different for Draper complex, with one exception. Without an integrated and concentrated community and governmental effort to attract a major user to the Draper complex, it is unlikely that the Draper complex will be effectively redeveloped in the foreseeable future.

Public Sector Involvement

In many ways, the public sector will have to be a leader in the effort. Local and state

government will be the vanguard of efforts to encourage large commercial, institutional or government users to consider the Draper complex as a location. Government may have the only leverage which can convince a major user to select the Draper Complex for a large block of space. Similar to what was done to attract Gillette to make a major commitment to the Devens Commerce Center, the same level of efforts of leaders will be necessary for Draper.

In addition, the public sector will need to play a role in various improvements needed at the Draper complex. These include general public works projects involving roadways, utilities and open-space beautification. Furthermore, assistance in preparing the site for marketing will be a critical ingredient. Demolition of the severely dilapidated central portion of the property tops the list of first steps. Internal accessway improvements, parking areas and site beautification closely follow demolition. These predevelopment costs are appropriate public sector priorities if the Draper complex is to be an important part of a public policy agenda.

Zoning

Hopedale has a rather traditional zoning by-law, which was recently codified and amended with the assistance of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. It tends to be oriented to single-family housing throughout the Town, with some small pockets of commercial and industrial activity. The three principal industrial zones are located near the airport, the Draper complex and at the northerly boundary of the Town near Route 140. Commercial zones are located at the southern boundaries of the Town with Mendon, Bellingham and Milford, some small areas along Route 16 and in the Town center. A few "overlay" districts exist in the by-law, including groundwater protection, townhouse development and performance residential development. While the groundwater

protection overlay districts are specifically defined on the map and add to governing provisions for use districts, the townhouse and performance residential development districts can be approved by the Town for specific proposals and are used to augment and change the zoning standards for the developments with the involvement and approval of the Town.

A dilemma facing the Draper complex is that both non-residential and residential uses can be part of the overall plan for redevelopment of the property. Currently, no zone or overlay district effectively contemplates the multiplicity of uses needed for the project's successful redevelopment. Accordingly, it is recommended that a new zone be established in Hopedale and the zoning by-law be amended, accordingly. Recommended is a new "Town Center Redevelopment" district which would specifically apply to the Draper complex and recognize the unique circumstances for this property with regard to its redevelopment and the future of the community.

The new Town Center Redevelopment zone would not only provide for a multiplicity of uses, but also provide for revised standards to regulate redevelopment at the property. For example, it is proposed that a large, multi-use development at the site would have different parking demands than a project which has generally the same types of uses. The demands for parking differ in magnitude and timing, depending of the type of use involved, whereby certain uses can share parking facilities because peak needs occur at different, non-competing times during the day and during a given week.

Another reason a special zone is needed for the Draper complex is that the building styles on the property are different than any other buildings found in the community. The Hopedale Zoning By-Law prohibits residential uses above the first floor of a commercial building. While this

provision may be more than appropriate for every other property in the Town of Hopedale, the style and magnitude of the buildings at the Draper complex would suggest that residential be most reasonably located on upper floors, if residential becomes a part of the appropriate redevelopment mix of uses. Given the multi-floor nature of the buildings along Hopedale and Freedom Street, it would seem inappropriate for residential uses to be limited to the first floor of the buildings with commercial or industrial uses above.

The proposed Town Center Redevelopment Zone would permit commercial, industrial, institutional and residential uses to be redeveloped on the large Draper complex site in much the same way such uses might be found in any community. In this case, however, it will be accomplished under a master plan with all the community regulations and controls contained in the Town's zoning and subdivision by-laws. Therefore, instead of haphazard intermixing of incompatible uses, the plan will be brought through implementation in a thoughtful, deliberate manner with a high degree of public sector supervision and involvement.

Summary of Recommended Strategic Plan

1. Demolition of dilapidated buildings, leaving frontage along Freedom and Hopedale Streets.
2. New access improvements on Fitzgerald Drive as the principal access into the rear of the complex, with secondary access points on Hopedale and Freedom Streets.
3. Creation of parking and amenities for development in the interior of the site in conjunction with access improvements.
4. Opening and restoration of the Mill River as a central focal point of the complex's development.
5. Phased redevelopment of existing buildings to remain into manageable blocks of

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space.

6. Provide new development parcels for modest commercial, light industrial and R&D development.

7. Eliminate Grafton & Upton abandoned rail tracks and buildings at the site and to the rear of Town Hall and other municipal buildings.

8. Relocate improved and expanded athletic fields to property behind Town Hall to create a municipal complex with convenient access by Town residents and school children.

9. Develop the land at the existing ballfield and land fill as a small-scale industrial and office park with access via Fitzgerald Drive.

10. Harness the support and involvement of community, regional, state and national leaders to identify Draper as a high priority redevelopment project.

11. Using these resources undertake a concentrated and targeted marketing effort to attract a major user to the site as the first phase of the project's renewal.

12. Build on this major user to the site, create a new market dynamic for the project and employ the momentum of the major user to attract other users to the property.

13. Maximize public sector financial resources for the many site and redevelopment improvements necessary to make the project competitive in the marketplace.

14. Adopt a new Central Redevelopment zoning district for the property and adjoining areas which fosters multiple use development of the property including commercial, industrial, institutional and residential uses.

15. Enhance development prospects through the acquisition of various infill or contiguous parcels of underused land.

The Next Steps

In order to bring the redevelopment of the Draper Complex closer to a reality, at least two initiatives must be taken - a targeted marketing

program must be organized and more detailed infrastructure planning and cost estimates must be developed.

The Marketing Program: This aspect of the project transcends the traditional marketing plan. In addition to the important aspects of advertising, market segmenting, staffing, brokerage relationships, brochures and marketing facilities at the site, an important political objective must be achieved. Critical to the success of the Draper complex redevelopment will be the need to harness community support and that of state and private sector leadership. The marketing plan will be a key, but could be meaningless without the ability to provide a foundation of support for the project. It is recommended that this effort not merely write a plan for such activity, but rather outreach to community, government and business leaders to build an effective base of support for financing predevelopment costs as well as for the overall future success of the project.

The cost of predevelopment activities necessary to pave the way for redevelopment are essentially unknown. This report assumes the costs will entail approximately \$5 Million. This figure, however, is more intuitive than it is definitive. The recommendation that Fitzgerald Drive be used as principal access to the site and the industrial/office park beyond is merely in conceptual form. The relocation of the athletic fields is similarly conceptual. If the community is to fund such field relocation with Open Space Bond Bill money, more detailed planning and costing will be necessary. Demolition and site amenities need to be planned and costed in greater detail. Environmental issues appear to be manageable; however, there will need to be a greater understanding of these considerations before demolition can proceed. Structural consequences of demolition on the buildings planned to remain need to be addressed. It will be these factors which will better define the level

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of predevelopment effort necessary to bring the Draper complex to the stage of redevelopment. They will also create a better physical and economic environment for the Town of Hopedale and the surrounding area.

It is recommended that further assistance of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (formerly the Massachusetts Government Land Bank) be requested for these necessary next steps. This report proposes both a physical and strategic plan for the project. As well, it candidly identifies major obstacles and weaknesses with proposed initiatives to overcome deficiencies. The magnitude of the complex, its location, the current market conditions and the physical condition of the property are major hurdles in the way of the project's success. Nevertheless, the complex will remain, regardless of future actions. This is not a tract of fields and woods which will remain in an unchanged condition should a planned development project not go forward. The Draper complex will either be redeveloped or continue to deteriorate and continue to negatively impact its surrounding area. It will not go away. It cannot be ignored. It will be with us and it is we, as a community and region, who have the responsibility to take positive action. The Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development and the Massachusetts Electric Company have reflected this community responsibility in providing financial support for this study. It will be important for continued support in order that the potential for the redevelopment of the Draper complex be secured.